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Assembly

# Committee for Health

## Minutes of Proceedings

Thursday, 3 February 2022

**Meeting Location:** virtual meeting

**Present by Video or Teleconference:**

Colm Gildernew MLA (Chairperson)

Pam Cameron MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Paula Bradshaw MLA

Gerry Carroll MLA

Alan Chambers MLA

Deborah Erskine MLA

Órlaithí Flynn MLA

Colin McGrath MLA

Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

**In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:**

Keith McBride (Clerk)

Roisin Donnelly (Assistant Clerk)

Deirdre Farry (Assistant Clerk)

Brendan Miskelly (Clerical Supervisor)

Chris McAfee (Clerical Officer)



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Ellen Wilson (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 9.32 am in closed session.

**1. Adoption and Children Bill – Consideration of delegated powers in the Bill**

The Examiner of Statutory Rules, Angela Kelly and Bill Clerk, Dr Kathryn Aiken joined the meeting by video-conference at 9.32 am.

The Bill Clerk briefed the Committee on a number of the Department of Health's proposed amendments to the Adoption and Children Bill.

The Examiner of Statutory Rules briefed the Committee on the delegated powers provisions within the Adoption and Children Bill.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to ask the Department of Health to provide further briefing on: its proposed new clauses to the Bill to give effect to the recommendation from the report of the Truth Recovery Design Panel relating to the preservation of records; and the delegated powers within the Bill.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

*The meeting was suspended at 10.26 am and resumed at 10.31 am in public session.*

**2. Apologies**

None.



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### 3. Chairperson's Business

- i. The Chairperson advised that the VOYPIC report launch event being sponsored by the Committee would take place on 16 February in the Long Gallery.
- ii. The Chairperson welcomed the ongoing progress of the Organ Donation Bill through the legislative stages in the Assembly.
- iii. The Chairperson reminded Members that the joint meeting with the Education Committee to receive a briefing from NICCY was scheduled to take place on 9 February.
- iv. The Chairperson advised that World Cancer Day would take place on 4 February and highlighted the devastating impact of a cancer diagnosis on children and young people.
- v. The Chairperson advised that he has been made aware of significant and ongoing problems that members of the BME community are experiencing in registering for GPs and the Committee will receive correspondence relating to this matter.

### 4. Draft Minutes

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2022 subject to minor amendment.

### 5. Matters Arising

Carál Ní Chuilín raised the matter of reports of the First Minister's intention to announce his resignation later today and asked for clarity on how this would impact the Bills that had not completed all the legislative stages in the Assembly.



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**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to ask the Department of Health for its assessment of the impact of the First Minister's resignation on the progress of Executive Bills.

### **6. Hospital Parking Charges Bill – Evidence from the Department of Health**

The following officials from the Department of Health joined the meeting by video-conference at 10.35 am:

Preeta Miller, Director of Infrastructure and Investment; and

Anne-Marie Smyth, Infrastructure Investment Directorate.

The officials briefed the Committee on the Hospital Parking Bill.

A question and answer session followed.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

### **7. SL1: UK SI The Human Medicines Regulations 2021 – Early Access to Medicines Scheme**

The following officials from the Department of Health joined the meeting by video-conference at 11.29 am:

Chris Garland, Senior Principal Pharmaceutical Officer;

Isobel Riddell, Medicines Policy Branch;

Ryan Wilson, Director of Secondary Care; and

Helena Brown, Secondary Care.



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The officials briefed the Committee on a proposed statutory instrument to amend the Human Medicines Regulations 2012 to regulate for the Early Access to Medicines Scheme.

A question and answer session followed.

The officials agreed to provide the Committee with further information on issues raised.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed it was content with the proposal for the Statutory Instrument.

*The meeting was suspended at 12.00 pm and resumed at 12.11 pm.*

**Present by Video or Teleconference:**

Colm Gildernew MLA (Chairperson)

Pam Cameron MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Paula Bradshaw MLA

Alan Chambers MLA

Deborah Erskine MLA

Órlaithí Flynn MLA

Colin McGrath MLA



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**8. SR 2022/06 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022**

The following departmental officials joined the meeting by video-conference at 12.10 pm:

David Hughes, Health Protection Branch;

Siobhan Kelly, Health Protection Branch;

Richard Duffin, Health Protection Branch;

Niall Donnelly, Health Protection Branch; and

Jane Holmes, The Executive Office.

The officials briefed the Committee on five statutory rules (agenda items 8 to 12) which make provisions relating to Coronavirus restriction measures.

A question and answer session followed.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

The Committee considered SR 2022/06 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 which makes a number of technical amendments including, amending the reasons a person is permitted to leave their seat in theatres, concert halls, conference and exhibition venues and other indoor venues and to insert a sentence to clarify the definition of a standing event.

**Agreed:** The Committee considered SR 2022/06 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 and recommended that it be approved by the Assembly.



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**9. SR 2022/11 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Wearing of Face Coverings) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022**

The Committee considered SR 2022/11 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Wearing of Face Coverings) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 which removes the requirement to provide proof of exemption if requested by a relevant person and reinstates the reasonable excuse of severe distress.

**Agreed:** The Committee considered SR 2022/11 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Wearing of Face Coverings) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 and recommended that it be approved by the Assembly.

**10. SR 2022/12 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 (Amendment No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022**

The Committee considered SR 2022/12 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 (Amendment No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 which removes the requirement to remain seated and the maximum number that can be seated at one table in hospitality settings.

**Agreed:** The Committee considered SR 2022/12 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 (Amendment No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 and recommended that it be approved by the Assembly.



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**11. SR 2022/16 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 (Amendment No.3) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022**

The Committee considered SR 2022/16 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 (Amendment No.3) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 which makes amendments to permit dancing and allow nightclubs to reopen and amends the requirements for COVID-status certification to apply only to nightclubs and indoor unseated, or partially seated events with 500 people or more. It also removes the requirement for social distancing measures within office premises.

**Agreed:** The Committee considered SR 2022/16 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 (Amendment No.3) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 and recommended that it be approved by the Assembly.

**12. SR 2022/18 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Wearing of Face Coverings) (Amendment No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022**

The Committee considered SR 2022/18 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Wearing of Face Coverings) (Amendment No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 which removes the requirement that failure to comply with Regulation 4D is an offence.

**Agreed:** The Committee considered SR 2022/18 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Wearing of Face Coverings) (Amendment No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 and recommended that it be approved by the Assembly.





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**13. LCM: The Health and Care Bill – Information about payments etc. to persons in the health care sector**

The Chairperson advised that Department of Health officials were unavailable to attend today's meeting to brief the Committee on the LCM relating to the Health and Care Bill – Information about payments etc. to persons in the health care sector.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to defer its consideration of the LCM.

**14. LCM: The Health and Care Bill – Part 3 Arm's Length Bodies Transfer of Functions Provision**

The Chairperson advised that Department of Health officials were unavailable to attend today's meeting to brief the Committee on the LCM relating to the Health and Care Bill – Part 3 Arm's Length Bodies Transfer of Functions Provision.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to defer its consideration of the LCM.

**15. Correspondence**

- i. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health regarding COVID-19 indemnity arrangements.
- ii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister of Health advising of the intention to introduce the Adult Protection Bill early in the next mandate.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward the Minister's correspondence to Families Involved NI as it had raised this matter with the Committee.



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- iii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health confirming that equality screening on the 3% pay offer was not carried out.
- iv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health regarding the Spring Supplementary Estimates.
- v. The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the Committee for the Executive Office to the Department of Health regarding the establishment of the regional trauma network.
- vi. The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the Department of Health and Social Care to the House of Lords Sub-Committee on the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland regarding the Health and Care Bill.
- vii. The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the House of Lords Sub-Committee on the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland to the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs regarding the provision of medicines to Northern Ireland under the protocol.
- viii. The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding the CEV Engagement Platform.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to remind the Department of Health of the Committee's earlier correspondence on this matter.

- ix. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual regarding the collection of data relating to protests outside the Belfast HSCT EMA clinic and noted that it was awaiting a response from the Belfast Trust in relation to this matter.
- x. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual regarding a complaint against the Minister for Health.



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- xi. The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding senior appointments with statutory mental health services in Northern Ireland.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Department of Health for a response to the issues raised.

- xii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Speaker's Office regarding the sponsorship of an exhibition in Parliament Buildings.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to sponsor the exhibition.

- xiii. The Committee noted correspondence from a Nursery School Principal regarding concerns about the support available to children with special educational needs.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Department of Health for a response to the issues raised.

- xiv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Stroke Association and NI Chest Heart and Stroke requesting the publication of the 2019 consultation responses and workforce analysis relating to Reshaping Stroke Care that the Minister of Health received last year.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to request that the Department of Health publish this report.

- xv. The Committee noted the Ninth, Tenth and Eleventh reports of the Examiner of Statutory Rules for the 2021-2022 Session.

- xvi. The Committee noted that the Legislative Consent Memorandum in respect of the Health and Care Bill providing for a ban on virginity testing and hymenoplasty had been laid in the Assembly.



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- xvii. The Committee noted correspondence from the General Medical Council expressing its support for the provisions in the Health and Care Bill to ban virginity testing and hymenoplasty in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

### **16. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee agreed its Forward Work Programme.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to hold its meetings from 24 February going forward in a hybrid (virtual and in-person) format.

### **17. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

### **18. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee for Health was scheduled to take place at 9.30 am on Thursday, 10 February 2022.

The meeting was adjourned at 12.40 pm.

**Colm Gildernew MLA,  
Chairperson, Committee for Health**